1/30/72

Dear Howard,

I have been guolty of a stupid oversight i ask you to help me correct. in part it comes from not really understandinf lsttimer's strange cgaracter. if it is not vital for the epilogue i will be writing, it can be helpful in other ways. politically at least he is paranoid. he has a kingOsize and odd-shaped ego, uses the jargon of the radical-right in offf-guard moments and will not face any kind of opposition. i think he has come to believe his nonsense quite sincerely.having now listened to more of him that jerry transcribed, i have also formed the impression that he has a secret,gnawing wonder about what he is into, his competence for it, etc. after i had sent him the questions of which i sent you a copy (no response) i had a friend interview him.

now another friend also tried to, but can get no response. the difference is that this second friend is one i has backgrounded, who then interviewed cyril an wrote a straight news story on it. i mean the traditional kind, not one consoling to lattimer. i know that although that story was not printed in new york, lattimer knows all about that story and resents it. more, he has complained about it and the refusal of people to believe what he wants taken on faith in him. if he comes accross as deeply convinced in ~~him~~ his widdom and understanding, his response to a few specific questions is so far below his comprehension and intelligence that he has to know better: example, confusing the number of fragments he has seen in the jfk and jbc x-rays with their weight. he knows better. so, his reaction to the friend who had not kissed his ass in news stories and, of course, his failure to answer me, tell me that the chances of his being unaware of criticism are slight. he may have a friendly source or he is quite capable of having a clipping service. so, you can't write him in your own name.

withall, he is not as bright as his position in his field would lead one to believe.

i would like you to write him in the name of a student you can trust and who will not talk, as i would like you not to discuss this with any of us on the chance the correspondence may flourish and we may learn more about him. one of the perplexing this is how a sophisticated man like marshall could puck a real wierdo for this or worse, permit it to happen. when you are here we can go further into possibilities, but one i regard as real is that he is actually doing federal bidding.

begin by telling him that you are much impressed that of all the people who might have been selected for the honor and responsibility of being the first to make an independent examination of the autopsy materials (avoid the use of words like suppressed, etc), and among the things this means to you is that he enjoys the confidence of the kennedy family. tell him (that is, your trusted friend will tell him) that while campus discussion of this subject had subsided, the NYT story quoting him revived it and you would like to be better prepared to cope with the doubters. that after the first argument, you had backed off and done some research and found that he had gone to much trouble in his bullet studies and seemed to be focusing on two special aspects, which you can understand, busy as his professions obligations must keep him. so you would appreciate it if he could amplify a bit in these two areas. you may want to write for school publications, etc.

from your own research you think he failed to make the best argument possible when he discussed the flatness of the angle through the president's neck of the non-fatal shot. he restricted himself to that drawing. now from your understanding, what he says he saw seems to be close to exactly the measured angle of this same projectile through connally. that is, the angle through him is steeper by measurement than that through the next is by visual representation . give him the exact, if you'd like. the commission version thus would seem to depend upon something deflecting the shot, which is quite possible if it hit something, but what he says seems not to require this. is this in his view correct? if he measured the angle through the president, would he please tell you what it is and if in his opinion it is close to that through connally, close being enough because it is not possible to know the exact position in which connally was?

in this connection, stay away from ant mention, ecen suggestion, of the side-to-side angle and the clothes. but tell him that one of your doubting friends argued that the autopsy doctors measured the distance the point of entry was from the mastoid and based on that the commission actually postulated a steeper angle through the neck than the chart showed. did he make such a measurement or any other similar measurements? if so, what are they? you presume they are close enough to what he showed on cbs, but you would like to know because the president's body also could move, if what he interprets is what the autopsy doctors said and if this is in turn consistent woth a straight-line trajectory into connally to the point where it hit his rib, where you suppose some kind of change in direction may well have resulted.

one of your doubters argued that he referred to the ring of bruise around the entrance hole (be sure to talk in his terms, indicating no question bu that this was an entrance) but, while seeming to say he also saw the hole in the front, made no reference to whether or not it also showed a bruise. did it? and can bullet bruise in exiting?

another doubter argues that from what he is quoted as having said the question is not really settled about whether there could have been two different shots. did he see any pictures that eliminate the possibility that the hole in the back could have been from a lower-exiting bullet and the hole in the front be from another that exited anywhere but at that hole in the back? or do the pictures leave any possibility of crossed trajectories if, like this sensationalist thinking, there might have been two bullets? you want to be in a position to lay this kind of incredible thing to rest in your discussions and in possible writing.

tell him that you realize that newspapers do not use everything said by those they interview and that sometimes they have preconceptions, especially papers like the NYTimes andWash Post, so they only ask questions consistent with them. thus you have seen no reporting of anything he said of the cause of death. are the pictures ans x-rays he saw in accord with what the doctors said before the commission and the commission reported, are the woungs of the same size and in the same places? were there any others or indications of the possibility of any others? be careful here or you will scare him off. you might consider being a little apologetic at this point and saying that you are aware he had only so much time and in that time could only do so many things, and with his interest in the nonfatal shot and its great importance he may not have had time for much more.

conclude with some kind of approval of an effort to put the assassination and the doubting of the official account in a political context congenial to what i believe his political views are, radical right and say you found the way in which he put it in his fascinating "Similarities in Fatal Shootings of John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald". quote his own language back to him as I will quote it and ask him for his sources, regretting that with all the footnotes he appended, as is appropriate to genuine scholarship, you would like to pursue this further, and could he please refer you to his sources or any similar ones of which he may have learned since 1966. this is from page 1793 for your info., NYState Jour Med: while both shootings may well have been the actions of excited men in attacking what they considered to be a national enemy, there are many sophisticated observers who regard this point of view as being unduly naive. They believe that since both accused presidential assassins were active enemy sympathizers (Booth for the Confederacy and Oswald for the Communists), and since both shootings took place during an era of large-scale undercover operations, psychological persuasions, philosophic rivalry, and intelligence activity, that both men may well have been silenced as part of a larger design" for christs sake don't ask him what the concludind part meand,make on you understand it, as i do not. You might want to commend his forthrightness in using the word enemy, as he does also on page 1788. why mince words?

Ask him also if he plans to write any kind of report on this examination and if so when and where may you look for it?

one other things about doubters. they keep making nasty hints that he had some kind of inside track through the kennedy family or its representative, or the government. in your view, even if ot were true it would be irrelevant, for you can understand a desire

on their part to have someone in whom they have personal confidence make this important examination. in your view his medical credentials are impressive enough, but skeptics sometimes ignor logic, so can he make it possible for you to make more direct refutation.

now this may be a fairly long letter calling for a fairly long response, and he may just be too busy. perhaps the prospects would be better if your signing frien were to hint a bit more strongly about writing for the publications where the student body is of __,000. i think the political stuff is the most important now, other questions you may think of i may already have answered. if you get a friendly response, you can always write another friendly letter, can't you? if anything, reduce what i have asked but do not increase it. perhap by ordering it in putline form you can make it seem shorter. but in order to get the political answer you are going to have to be careful in your formulations, not being excessively flattering or obvious yet giving him the notion that you think he is great and brave to face the wrath of all the leftwingers so anxious to tear down decent society and decent, concerned, selfless people, etc.

if you agree, please try and do this as fast as possible for he is being interviewed by others to my knowledge and other things impend. i would not have been surprised if jerry had phoned late last night to report another graham story.

if other things occur to you, please note them for the future so we do not forget them. i think you can see the point of some if not all of this without explanations now.

thanks and best,